CHAPTER - IV

TRAVANCORE THIRUNELVEI RELATION UNDER DHARMARAJA

King Rama Varma inherited a vast kingdom from his uncle Martanda Varma, who suppressed the reactionary feudal forces of Venad, viz, the Madampimar, Pillamar, Karyakkars and the Tavazhis. He carried out the conquest and consolidation of numerous rival petty principalities in the north. In 1734 he annexed Eledattu Svarupam (Kottarakara) and Peritally (Nedumangad). Desinganad (Quilon) was conquered in 1742. In the same year some portions of Kayamkulam were annexed, but it took four years to complete the conquest.\(^1\) Tekkumkur (Changanacherry) and Vadakkumkur (Kottayam and Ettumanur) were captured in 1750. Four years later, he occupied Chempakasseri (Ambalapuzha) and Karappuram. (Sherthal). Several minor kingdoms like Attingal, Panthalam, Punjar and Minachal were also annexed to his kingdom. Dutch forces were defeated at Kulachal in 1741 which ended the political ambitions of the Dutch East India Company in the Indian sub-continent.\(^2\)

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1 Sobhanan B Dr., Rama Varma of Travancore, Calicut, 1978, p.1

2 Gopala Krishnan, Kanyakumari District Gazetteer, p.11
Travancore emerged as the mightiest kingdom in the Malabar Coast and it became one of the premier states in South India as a result of the vigorous policies pursued by Martanda Varma. At the time of his death in 1758, the Kingdom extended from Cape Comorin in the south to Attoor backwater in the north. On the western border the Arabian Sea and in the east lay the mighty mountain ranges.

Fra Bartolomeo gives a clear picture of the condition of Travancore towards the end of Martanda Varma’s reign “The Kings of Travancore had hitherto been insignificant princes, whose territories extended only about fifteen or twenty miles up the country from Cape Comerin and were besides not very fruitful. The sovereign of that time Vira Martanda Varma, was uncle to the present King Rama Varma. He was a man of great pride, courage and talents; capable of undertaking grand enterprises and from his youth had been accustomed to warlike operations.

Rama Varma

After Vira Marthanda’s death the kingdom, in which perfect tranquility was now restored, to the present sovereign Rama Varma, who had just entered the twenty-fourth year of his age. Thus ended the dominion of the petty Malabar sovereigns and princes. Thus was humanity
avenged: and the licentiousness suppressed by which this country had been
distracted ever since tenth century”.³

The parents of Rama Varma were Parvati Rani of Attingal adopted
from Kulathunadu and Kilimanur Koyil Thampuran. The exact date of birth
of Rama Varma is not known. According to Fra Bartolomeo, a
contemporary historian, Rama Varma became the King at the age of twenty
four. Thus he might have been born in 1734. But local historians hold the
view that Rama Varma was born in 1724 and became king at the age of
thirty-four. Koyil Thampuran was murdered by some rebels when Rama
Varma was only three years of age.⁴ He was looked after by King Martanda
Varma, his maternal uncle. He got a sound training under him. It is said
that when his uncle Martanda Varma was engaged in a battle with
Kayamkulam, Rama Varma went in disguise to the hostile camp as a
Pathan and returned with all confidential information. As a young Prince
and heir-apparent he led several expeditions against the enemies. He
actively participated in administrative matters also. Thus even before his

³ Ibrahim Kunju, A.P., Rise of Travancore, Trivandrum, 1976, p.15
⁴ Shungunny menon; p; History of Travancore from the earliest times, Madras, 1872, p.138.
accession he had secured sufficient training in military affairs and administration. 5

He was well versed in several languages like Malayalam, Sanskrit, Persian, Hindustani and Tamil. He also studied European languages like Portuguese, Dutch and English. His English tutor Fra Bartholomeo stated that “the King had learned English for several months, and spoke it exceedingly well. As he observed that English was as familiar to me as the Malabar”. 6 Musical dance and Kathakali were his popular and regular entertainments.

A few hours before his death, King Martanda Varma called Prince Rama Varma, the heir-apparent and gave the following instructions:

1. “That no deviation, whatever, should be made in regard to the dedication of the Kingdom to Sree Padmanabha Swamy and that all further territorial acquisitions should be made over to the Devasam”
2. “That not a hair’s breadth of alteration or deviation should be made in the established charities and the institutions connected with the same.”
3. “That no family dissension or quarrel should be allowed in the Royal house”.

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5 Ibrahim Kunju, A.P., op.cit., p.181
6 Shungunny Menon, op.cit., p.174 -75
4. “That the expenses of the state should not be allowed to exceed the income”.

5. “That the palace expenditure should be defrayed from the profits of the commercial department”.

6. “That above all, the friendship existing between the English East India Company and Travancore should be maintained at any risk and that full confidence should always be placed in the support and aid of that honorable association”.

Throughout his reign Rama Varma bore in mind these solemn injunctions. Actually it became his code of conduct. Among the six cardinal points the first five dealt with the internal administration of the State. The last one related to diplomatic relations of Travancore. As per the desire of his uncle he blindly adhered to the English alliance from the beginning to the end of his reign. Amidst several trials and tribulations he kept this alliance alive. The English East India Company which had been struggling hard to establish their commercial stations in India during the reign of Martanda Varma was now on its way to imperial domination in India. They utilized Travancore as a convenient base for hostile operation against Travancore the enemies of their making. During the reign of

7 Sobhanan B, op.cit, p.4

8 Caldwell R., A political and General history of the districts of Tinnevelly, p.55
Rama Varma the war with the Carnatic commenced immediately after his coro-
nation. The relation between Travancore and Tirunelveli continued for six years
under one reason or other.

**Relations with the Nawab of the Carnatic**

From the very early days of his reign, Rama Varma was called upon
to face the invasion of Travancore territory across the Ghats by the armies
of the Nawab of the Carnatic. Even during the reign of Martanda Varma,
the hostile activities of the Carnatic Nawab posed a serious threat to his
eastern frontier. In 1734, he took possession of the twelve villages in
Tirunelveli from the Elayadathu Swarupam. After six years Safdar Ali, the
Nawab of Arcot sent an expedition under Chanda Sahib to recover the lost
territories in Tirunelveli. Martanda Varma who was pre-occupied with the
fight against Kayamkulam and the Dutch East India Company was forced
to appear before the conqueror by giving rich presents. After the death of
Chanda Sahib in 1752, Moodemiah, the Governor of Tiruchirappalli
returned those villages to Travancore for presents of ready money.9

Muhammad Ali, the new Nawab of the Carnatic deputed his elder
brother Mahfuz Khan with instructions to recapture those villages. In 1755

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9 Orme R., A History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan, II., Madras 1913, p. 399,400
the combined forces of Moodemiah and the King of Travancore defeated Mahfuz Khan and recovered the occupied areas. But the dispute continued unsettled. After several clashes in 1757, the Madras Government came forward to settle the dispute in an amicable manner. But the negotiations became abortive. At the same time Mahfuz Khan rebelled against the Nawab and permitted the Raja of Travancore to annex Kalakkad. The Nawab appointed Muhammad Yusuf Khan as the new Viceroy. He recaptured Kalakkad and the adjoining villages from Travancore. Martanda Varma breathed his last before the Kalakkad question could be settled.  

In 1758, when Dharma Raja ascended the throne of Travancore, Mahfuz Khan came to south. In 1759, Mahfuz Khan, the rebel governor joined the Poligars. They organised a hostile confederacy. Puli thevar, the Poligar Chief, wrote to the Raja of Travancore that “If he would quit the English, and join Mahfuz Khan against them, to give him whatsoever districts in the Tinnevelly country might lie convenient in his own”. The Maharaja out of sincerity and obligation to the parting words of his uncle rejected the proposal for a hostile combination and conveyed the matter to Yusuf Khan.  

On the other hand he concluded an alliance with Yusuf Khan against the hostile group. In September 1759, the Raja of Travancore

10 Orme R., A History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan., p.401

dispatched two thousand soldiers by way of Aralvaimozhi and ten thousand soldiers through Shenkotta. A Huzur Treasury Document dated 11th Kanni 935 M. E (23rd September 1759) mentions the expenses incurred in gathering various military stores for the attack on Vadakarai. At this juncture the Raja of Travancore demanded the cession of the district of Kalakkad in return for his support. Yusuf Khan was compelled by the circumstances to grant the request of the Raja.\textsuperscript{12}

At the approach of the combined forces, the Poligar of Vadakarai took refuge in Nelkattanseval. On 6th November 1759, the combined forces of Yusuf Khan and the Raja of Travancore invaded Nelkattanseval. After three days of spirited encounter Yusuf Khan came out victorious. A nittu dated 13th Dhanu 935 M. E. (24th December 1759 A. D.) deals with the allocation of funds for continuing the siege of Vasudevanallur. On 22nd December 1759, following the arrival of fresh military supplies from Anjengo and Nagapattiam the combined forces captured Vasudevanallur, one of the strongest forts of Puli Thevar.\textsuperscript{13} Soon disagreement arose between Yusuf Khan and Muhammad Ali. The Nawab rejected the cession of Kalakkad. Yusuf Khan granted the request of the King of Travancore without the prior consent of the Nawab. But it was approved by the Madras

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[\textsuperscript{12}] Military country correspondence, Vol. XVI, pp. 168 - 170
\item[\textsuperscript{13}] Ibid., p. 171
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Government as it would end the constant dispute between Travancore and the Carnatic. Yusuf Khan also rebelled against the Nawab and joined the enemies of the Nawab.\textsuperscript{14}

Yusuf Khan organised a vast army within a short time. He sought the assistance of all the South Indian powers against the Nawab and their bosom friend, the English East India Company. The reluctance of the Nawab to grant the villages made no change in the attitude of the Raja of Travancore.

He refused to support Yusuf Khan and organised a countermove against Yusuf Khan. The coalition included the ruler of Travancore, and the Poligars of Vadakarai, Sivagiri and Panchalamkurichi. It was led by the Travancore forces, which consisted of 10,000 troops and numerous irregulars trained by D’Lannoy.

In November, the forces of Travancore assembled at Thovalai on the south-eastern border of the Kingdom. The troops from Panjalamkurichi and Pattapuram joined the forces of Travancore.\textsuperscript{15} The combined forces occupied the towns of Panakudy, Yerwadi and Tirukurumgudi. Another expedition of Travancore encamped at Ariyankavu on the Western Ghats and made a junction with the forces of the former Poligar chiefs of Vadakarai and Sivagiri. The combined

\textsuperscript{14} Military Count. Corr., Vol. VII p.375 Letter from Lord Piggott to Yusuf Khan

\textsuperscript{15} Sobhanan B., op.cit., p.9
forces consisting of about thirty thousand soldiers captured Shenkotta and invaded Vadakarai held by the troops of Yusuf Khan.¹⁶ At the head of one thousand cavalry and six thousand infantry Yusuf Khan marched to Tirunelveli. He secured more assistance from the Maravas and some of the Poligars. He began the attack against the aggressors from both sides. He dispatched half of the army to the south and another half to the West. He took the leadership of the Western expedition and it ended in a brilliant success. The combined forces of Travancore and Poligars met with defeat at Vadakarai “They evacuated Shenkotta and Puliyara and took shelter in the hills. After leaving two columns on the western frontier for its protection, he marched to Kalakkad with the rest of the forces. Before his arrival in November 1762, the Raja was defeated in the Southern division.”¹⁷

On 14 November, Yusuf Khan launched a heavy attack upon the columns of Travancore. Between 14 November, 1762 and 22 January, 1763 Yusuf Khan led ten expeditions against Travancore forces. But in the encounters Travancore forces came out victorious. In February 1763, following the arrival of reinforcements from different directions, Yusuf Khan made another attack against Travancore. During this expedition he secured a decisive victory. Inflicting heavy losses upon the Raja’s troops he forced them to surrender all their posts and to

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¹⁶ Chopra P.N., History of South India, Delhi., 2003, p. 54

¹⁷ Caldwell R. op.cit., p. 93
retreat to the fortress of Aralvaimozhi.\textsuperscript{18} He continued his raids into the interior parts of Travancore. He captured Aralvaimozhi and advanced up to Neyyattinkara. He plundered South Travancore, set fire to villages and temple chariots, inflicted heavy losses upon the forces of the Raja, and cut off the noses of the prisoners of war. In fact he continued the war with a determination to capture the entire state. The terrified Raja requested protection from the Nawab, Mon. Marchland, a French Commander with Yusuf Khan, wrote that the Travancore forces were defeated and the King of Travancore submitted, restoring “the guns, carts and troops which he had captured.” \textsuperscript{19}

The Raja got support neither from the Nawab nor from the Madras Government. The Raja who had fought against the rebel in support of the Nawab and the English was ignored by all. At last deserted by his allies the Maharaja submitted to the dictates of Yusuf Khan. On 16\textsuperscript{th} February, the Raja signed an agreement with him: “I, King of Travancore do give the following agreement to Muhammad Yusuf Khan Bahadur, ruler of the Madras country, I shall in such case regard your enemy as my own and send an army of horse, sepoys.. I shall commit no hostilities in your district nor give a place to your enemy in my dominions. On the contrary, I shall act in perfect union and friendship with you. Thus I give this

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\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p. 360
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agreement to you.” But even after the restoration of peace, the Raja refused to implement the treaty and he again supported the Nawab against Yusuf Khan.  

Still the Raja requested the restoration of the villages of Kalakkad and Vadakarai and to relieve him from the obligation of paying tribute. The Nawab rejected the proposals and demanded forty-thousand silver chakrams and four elephants as tribute every year. He resolved to enforce these provisions upon the Raja and he even sought the assistance of the Madras Government. On October 1764, the Raja was forced to quit Kalakkad. After the withdrawal of the forces of the Nawab from Tirunelveli, the Raja’s forces again occupied Kalakkad. Soon the Nawab’s forces once again compelled Travancore forces to retreat and retire to their former position on the Ghats. A Mathilakam record speaks of the instructions of the King of Travancore to strengthen the defenses and keep a close watch against the invading armies of the Nawab against Kalakkad and Shenkotta.

In January 1765 the representatives of the Nawab and the Raja of Travancore met at Trivandrum in order to settle the dispute amicably. It was presided by Major John Call, the Company’s agent from Madras. The Nawab demanded all the territories extending up to the crest of the Western Ghats and

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20 Chopra P.N., op.cit., p. 55

21 Shungunny menon op.cit., p. 57

22 Rajayyan K. Dr., History of Tamil Nadu 1565-1965, Madurai, 1978, p. 135
tribute from the Raja. But the Raja proposed to the Company’s authorities: “The twelve districts of Kallicaud and Chengotta, Guilangodu, Aicudy, Chambier, Vadakarai and Maleangulong I claim, all these provinces which anciently belonged to the house of Travancore. The Nawab has taken by force, these twelve districts of Shenkotta which in the time of my ancestors we possessed, if the Honorable Company will act in such manner that the Nawab will give up these places to this House I propose to give the Honorable Company two thousand candles of pepper annually without fail and permission to erect a flagstaff at Brinjhon and to the Nawab sixty thousand (60000) panams and one elephant yearly besides, exclusive of which forty thousand (40000) panams, which this house usually paid to the Nawab, and thus I determine to give the Nawab (100000) one hundred thousand panams and one elephant yearly without fail.”

The Nawab was not prepared to accept the terms put forward by the Raja of Travancore. When the negotiations failed, the Raja again marched his forces to Panakudy, Kalakkad and Shenkotta. English forces led by Campbell Donald compelled the Raja to evacuate the occupied areas. But the Company once again compelled the Nawab to settle the disputes amicably. The representatives of the Nawab and the Raja met at

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23 Ibid., p.136

24 Sobhanan B., op.cit., p.12
Palayamkottai on 14 December 1766. The Raja submitted the following proposals:25

“I, Rama Rauj, Zemindar of the Malavar country, dependent upon the Carnatic Panyen Ghaut, having repented of my past transgressions and submitted myself to the Circar of Nabob Waulau jau Ummeroul Hind, Umdatul Moleck, Serajate Doulah, Anavarden Cawn Bahadur Munsoor Jung, do hereby swear that I will by no means whatever in future do anything contrary to the will and pleasures of the Circar, but will ever sincerely remain in obedience and alliance with the said Nabob assisting his Amuldars of Madura and Tinnevelly in every respect and sending a sufficient extra forces whenever required to punish Hyder Naique. I will on no account whatever demand the Calicad etc., districts which never did belong to me, nor will take one wajub (12 inches) of ground even the Shenkotta Villages accepted without the walls of any country. A free passage through the Shenkotta Arunge Sanstree ghauts shall and be allowed the Tinnevelly merchants. The Circar’s enemies shall ever be esteemed as my own and its friends as mine. I do hereby swear moreover to pay the Circar by the means of Mannick Ju Pundits house and Nellacuntanker at Madras the full and just sum of Triremlore rupees two hundred thousand (2,00,000) one hundred and fifty thousand (1,50,000) being on account

of some transactions and fifty thousand (50,000) for the plundering of the Calicad districts, the Shenkotta and Cunniacumary money stipulated Piscash and the Durbar expenses, as they were in the time of the Rajas of Trichinopoly, shall be paid besides so far from being neglected or dilatory in the Circar’s business, I will on every occasion with the greatest despatch and fidelity the above engagement shall be performed in the same manner by any successor to the Nabob, Umdatul Omrah Bahadur and the rest of his Excellency’s children. 26

In witness whereof and that no alteration may take place therein, I give this with my free will and consent swearing my God Padmanabha Swami and my Religion to the performance thereof. Dated the 11th of the Moon Rajub in the year Hejira 1180, equal to the 14th December 1766. 27 In reply to this the Nawab granted a cowl to the Raja. It reads: “In consideration of the five obligations you have given me under your seal setting forth your perpetual obedience and alliance to the Circar you’re not demanding on any account the districts of Calicad etc., your assisting the Amuldars of Tinnevelly and Madura in every respect and your sending an additional force whenever required to punish the disturbers together with the particulars denoting your attachment and fidelity, all which is expressed on the back of this Purvanna, through my favour and goodness, I


27 Sobhanan, B, op.cit., p.14
forgive your past transgressions and agreeable to your request do agree to receive the sum Thirumunbu Rupees two hundred thousand in lieu of the former transaction, and your plundering the Calicad district and as it has been your desire for this long time to possess the villages of Shenkotta and Kanyakumari together with the Pagoda thereof, in condition of your paying yearly Nazar I have further out of my great favour, conferred the same upon you on will therefore he mindful of all these favors, agreeable to your obligations exert yourself more and more, in showing your obedience and fidelity to the Circar and paying yearly the Suncota and Kanyakumari money and the stipulated Piscash which done make yourself easy and contented for as long as you show your fidelity and attachment you may depend upon the Circar’s favour. Dated 11th of the Moon Raju in the year of Hegira 1180, equal to the 14th of December 1766”.

Thus the disputes were settled. The Nawab recognized the Western Ghats as the general boundary of his state and ceded Cape Comorin and Shenkotta to Travancore. The Raja abandoned his claims on Kalakkad. He agreed to pay 700 white Madurai Chakrams as the price of the temple at Cape Comorin and 3000 white Madurai Chakrams for Shenkotta. Further he

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consented to give two lakhs of Travancore Rupees as arrears of tribute and compensation for the losses caused by incursions into Kalakkad.

At a later date the Maharaja wrote to the Supreme Government that “their Highness, the Nizam and the Nawab of Arcot having agreeably to the commands of his Majesty Shah Allum honored and exalted me among my equals to the full extent of my desire by the transmission of a grant authorizing me to assume the titles of Sree Puddum Nauth Douss Vanjee Paul, Cool Sighrah Uram Kureet Puttee Munnah Sultan Maha Rajah Ram Raj Bahadur, Shum Shur Jung, together with the rank of Punjazari or command over five thousand, the standard and the drum and I on my part went forth and met with due respect these tokens of regard that had been conferred upon me” 29

Further he promised to maintain friendship with the friends of the Nawab and enmity with his enemies. He agreed to refuse protection to the Poligars and rebels of the Carnatic. He voluntarily offered four thousand Travancore Chakrams together with an elephant as annual tribute, “a large elephant that may not only have teeth but be fit for the said Nabob’s riding also”. In case of any delay he promised to pay a fine also. 30 This settlement was very significant in many


respects for, in the annals of Travancore history her sovereign again accepted the suzerainty of a power outside Kerala and agreed to pay tribute. He secured the districts of Chenkotta and Cape Comorin, which extended up to the natural frontiers. Through these transactions the Nawab of the Carnatic and his patron the English East India Company emerged as the dominant power in South India.  

**New approach of Dharma raja**

Rama Varma followed the footsteps of Marthanda Varma. Throughout his period of 40 years rule, he was a sincere friend of the British. The East India Company was also the guardian and the protector of Travancore. The English men who came to India mainly for trade, exploited the simplicity of Rama Varma. They used Travancore as a base for operations against their enemies in India. The Anglo-Mysore wars strengthened the relationship between East India Company and Rama Varma.

During the Mysore wars Rama Varma provided military help to the British. Because of the support extended by Rama Varma, Tippu Sultan of Mysore became the dead enemy of Travancore. Dharma raja reported the matters to the British. Sir Archibald Campbell, the then Governor of Madras assured the Raja of the Companies support and ordered Col. Bridges to despatch a Company of sepoys

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31 Ibid., p.69

32 Pol. Cons. Pro. 25 Nov., 1793, p. 11795
from Palayamkottai under the command of Captain Bannerman to act as a guard to Raja. But during the period of fight between Mysore and Travancore the British Government did not come forward to help the Travancore government.\(^{33}\)

**Treaty of Srirangapattanam**

The British Government was not ready to help the Travancore Government because they wanted to destroy the power of Travancore and keep the state as a subsidiary one. The Company started war on Mysore only after the defeat of Travancore.\(^ {34}\) Forgetting all the insults, at the hands of the British, Dharma raja came forward to help the British in the second Anglo-Mysore war. The Dewan of Travancore, Raja Kesavadas was sent under the command of an army. Dharma raja extended full cooperation till the war with Mysore was over. In the Mysore war Tippu was defeated, the war came to an end by the treaty of Srirangapattanam. During the peace treaty Travancore was kept out of the conference. The name of Rama Varma or Travancore was not even mentioned in the treaty of Srirangapattanam. All the demands of Dharma raja were refused.\(^ {35}\)

The Raja wrote to Marquess Cornwallis that the omission of his name in the treaty of Srirangapattanam “cannot he exceeded by anything in its effects to

\(^ {33}\) Pol. Cons. Pro. 25 Nov, 1793, p. 69

\(^ {34}\) Pol. Cons. Pro25 Nov, 1793, p.11795

\(^ {35}\) Aitchison, A collection of treaties engagements and sanads relating to India and neighbouring countries, Vol. IX, pp.233-8
lessen my dignity and honor in the eyes of my contemporaries. I was lost under a cloud of shame. I considered in my mind on what I might have done and what could have happened and I regretted that I had not met with a nice return for my exertions and for my sincerity and strenuously zealous attachment.”

The Raja in his letter to George Powney, the Political Resident charged him "that in consequence of the disagreement with my Dewan you had written to Lord Cornwallis and had prevented my Dewan from being permitted to go to Srirangapattanam to pay his respects to his Lordship and that you had been the means of omitting the insertion of my name in the treaty concluded between the allied powers and Tippu Sultan.”

The Treaty of Srirangapattanam finally marked the transformation of the English East India Company from mere traders into virtual rulers of Malabar. British control over Malabar became complete. The long-cherished ambition of the Company to establish trade monopoly in the lucrative business in spices was thus achieved.

36 Pol. Cons. Proc., 26 December, 1792, p. 8241
37 Kareem C. K., Kerala under Hider Ali and Tippu sultan, p.120
38 Ibid., pp.8249,50
Rama Varma alliance with Puli Thevar

The policy of the British looked serious and as the vital necessity of securing Madura was realised, Mohammed Yusuf was sent there with troops. So sooner had he left the district than Mahfouz Khan, who had been at Madura in negotiation with the rebels in the town and took the field once more with the Puli Thevan and his allies. A proclamation was issued announcing Mahfouz Khan as the Nawab’s renter; and negotiations were opened with the Travancore sovereign for the surrender to that ruler of Kalakkad and its neighbourhood. The town of Tinnevelly was taken and Palayamkottai besieged; the defenders made a sally and, with the aid of the poligars of Ettaiyapur.im and Panjalamkurichi, obliged the enemy to retire.39

Mohammad Yusuf returned once more to the district to find a strong conspiracy formed against him by Mahfouz Khan and the western poligars; the Travancore troops were in possession of Kalakkad; many towns in the Ambasamuthram and Srivaikundam taluks had become strongholds of the confederate's, and Palayamkottai itself was threatened. Muhammad Yusuf was beginning to make some progress, when lie was suddenly called away to Madras, then being closely besieged by the French.40

39 Kanyakumari District Gazetteer., op.cit., p.73-74

40 Caldwell R., op.cit., p.48
The crisis appeared to Puli Thevan to be his opportunity. Relying on the expectation of French assistance, he succeeded in effecting a momentary alliance between the two leagues of poligars, the eastern and the western, a task rendered easier by the fact that Kattabomma Nayakkan, the leader of the eastern section and a supporter of Muhamad Yusuf had just died. His successor declared himself from the outset an enemy of the English.\textsuperscript{41}

Such was the situation which Muhammad Yusuf found on his next return in 1759. His first efforts were directed towards the disruption of this confederacy and the restoration of the old antagonism between the east and the west. Kollankondan, a fort near Srivilliputtur under the Puli Thevan’s occupation, was captured. Kollarpatti, The stronghold of an eastern poligar, was next attacked and after some resistance overpowered and razed to the ground. The Uttumalai poligar, controlling the country to the north-west of Tinnevelly, who had hitherto shown little activity, was reduced to submission and his fort of Surandai occupied.\textsuperscript{42} From Kalakkad to Cape Comorin the Travancore troops were plundering the country, and in his anxiety to reduce the poligars' Muhammad Yusuf took the invaders into alliance. Vadakarai, the original stronghold of the poligar of Chokkampatti, not far from Shenkotta, was captured, and the poligar fled to his neighbour the Puli Thevan for refuge. The Puli Thevan, however, was equal to the situation. The

\textsuperscript{41} Sreedhara Menon P., A survey of Kerala history, Trivandrum., p.288

\textsuperscript{42} Kanyakumari District gazetteer., op.cit., p.74
news of a battle at Wand wash had already reached Mahfuz Khan, and the current version obtained from French sources was that the English had been defeated. Travancore wanted the district of Kalakkad, and Mahfouz Khan promised to secure it for him provided Travancore would join the confederates. The situation was explained to Muhammad Yusuf, who, disappointed in his expectation of guns and ammunition consigned for his use to Tuticorin and recognizing the overwhelming superiority of the newly threatened alliance, decided to secure the adherence of the ruler of Travancore by offering him Kalakkad and its neighbourhood. The bargain was accepted, and the Madras Government approved Muhammad Yusuf’s action.

Aided by the Travancore troops, Mohammad Yusuf, who by now had received ammunition from Anjengo, proceeded to attack Vasudevanallur, one of the outlying strongholds of the Puli Thevan. The fort, though of mud, was exceptionally strong and, situated as it was only three miles from the foot of the Ghats, was closely protected on the west and south by low hills and jungle. The position was considered by the poligar to be of first importance, and an immense army of "colleries" rallied to its defence.

43 Kanyakumari District gazetteer., p. 74
44 Rajayyan K., op.cit., p. 139
45 Caldwell R., op.cit., p. 119
Muhammad Yusuf turned his 18-pounder against the defenses; it did some damage but burst after a day’s firing. A storm was attempted, when instantly the Puli Thevan, issuing from Nelkattanseval in the rear, fell upon Muhammad Yusuf’s camp. The garrison was exultant, but Muhammad Yusuf continued the attack in the face of fire from the fort and the surrounding forest. The position became more and more hopeless, and before evening Yusuf decided to retire. The Travancoreans returned to their homes through the passes, and Muhammad Yusuf departed to Tinnevelly, where news of a new kind from an unexpected quarter reached him.46

Since 1658 the Dutch had been in possession of Tuticorin, having taken it from the Portuguese. They had factories on the coast at Vembar, Vaippar, Punnaikayal, Palayakayal, Manappad and Cape Comorin, and at Alvarthirunagari in the interior. The Dutch in Ceylon had lately received reinforcements from Batavia, some of which were despatched to Tuticorin and the other Dutch stations on the Tinnevelly sea-coast. As will subsequently appear, their appearance was due probably to the invitation of the poligars and also to offers of assistance from the king of Travancore. Muhammad Yusuf sent troops to Tuticorin to demand an explanation, but none was given. The Dutch troops marched to Alvarthirunagari, whilst Manappad was also occupied. Mohammad Yusuf collected four thousand

sepoys and some cavalry and marched to Alvarthirunagari. The Dutch immediately decamped to Tuticorin and sailed away; Manappad was also abandoned; and this curious alarm subsided as swiftly as it had arisen.47

Muhammad Yusuf now claimed that he had reduced the Tinnevelly district to submission and offered to take the rental of the district for four years at an annual rental of seven lakhs of rupees a year. The Nawab was reluctant to accept the offer, but the Presidency insisted. Maphuz Khan, who had apparently effected a reconciliation with his brother, the Nawab, left the district for good in 1760.

In 1761 Pondicherry was taken by the English, and the poligar’s long cherished design of a French alliance was fading. Indeed, so strong was the position of Muhammad Yusuf that by 1762 the gravest suspicious were felt at Madras regarding his loyalty to the Company.48

In December it was discovered that he was enlisting troops in Tanjore, his negotiations of 1759 with Travancore had by now awakened mistrust; he had provided the forts of Palayamkottai and Madura with stores, and the forces at his command were estimated at 27,000 men. Though his immediate charge was the Tinnevelly district, he had made his headquarters at Madura, and was daily receiving reinforcements from the French and Haidar All. A strong force was

47 Robert Sewell, The historical inscription of South India, New Delhi, 1983, p.313
48 Samuel Mateer, op.cit., p.17
equipped and despatched under the command of Colonel Monson to besiege him in Madura; and after a protracted siege the place was taken on the 14th October, 1764. Muhammad Yusuf was captured and hanged.\textsuperscript{49}

Major Charles Campbell, who in January 1764 had succeeded to the command of the army before Madura, set out on the 18th October for Palayamkottai, which surrendered immediately on his arrival. Major Call was deputed to make a settlement with the king of Travancore, and an arrangement was effected by which all the districts to the east of the mountains should be surrendered to the Nawab. Campbell and Call returned to Madura. Further negotiations ensued; and finally, in 1766, the districts of Kalakkad and Panakudy were definitely ceded to the Nawab. Certain reservations in regard to the Shenkotta tract being admitted in favour of the Raja. The precise nature of the Travancore claims over these villages continued in dispute for many years.\textsuperscript{50}

Meanwhile the poligars were ransacking the country once more and refusing to pay their dues. Major Flint was at Srivilliputtur and attempted unsuccessfully to reduce the Sivagiri outpost of Kollankondan. In February 1767 he marched against Panjalamkurichi and attempted to storm the fort, but was repulsed with heavy loss; a blockade was then decided on, but the defenders

\textsuperscript{49} Robert Sewell, op. cit., p.314

\textsuperscript{50} Military. Count. Corr., Vol. XVI, pp. 168,169
escaped in the night. In the north of the district Colonel Campbell, who had again returned from Madura, marched on Sattur and Sivagiri and dislodged their Garrisons; the forts were levelled. Thence he marched to Vasudevanallur, which he captured and garrisoned with troops. A cantonment was at the same time established at Sankaranainarkoil; a cessation of hostilities was announced, and through the agency of the Nawab’s manager, Hakim Ram, negotiations were opened with the poligars. The situation, however, remained in reality unchanged.

The poligar of Sivagiri was in open revolt and was soon joined by the other poligars. He was in treaty with the Dutch at Colombo and had collected ammunition sufficient to supply the force that was expected from that Government; he was negotiating with Haidar Ali, and the Nawabs Muhammadan renter was suspected of similar treachery. The Dutch at Tuticorin, on the other hand, were posing as the common enemy with the English of Haidar Ali; and the Governor- General was. In 1781, actually trying to negotiate with them an agreement by which, in return fora force of European infantry, 200 European artillery and 1,000 Malays, the district of Tinnevelly should be ceded to the Dutch, the nominal sovereignty of the Nawab remaining undisturbed. The Madras

51 Mily. Sundries, Vol. XL, pp. 82,83
52 Mily. Consultation Vol. XL. pp. 168,169
53 Press list of ancient Dutch records from 1657-1825. Serial No: 732, 24th January
54 Ibid., Serial No. 738
Government, however, declined to forward the treaty and referred the matter to the Court of Directors. In the following year open hostilities with the Dutch broke out; Tuticorin was raptured, and no more was heard of these proposals.

The year 1781 marks an important epoch in the history of the Tinnevelly district and of the Carnatic provinces in general. Towards the close of the year the Nawab assigned by treaty to the East India Company the management and control of the whole of the revenues of those districts, on the condition that he should be allowed one-sixth part of them for his personal uses. Superintendents were appointed to the districts to administer them on behalf of the Company and to receive the revenues. Mr. George Proctor was posted in 1781 to Tinnevelly; his management gave general dissatisfaction, and in 1783 he was succeeded by Mr. Irwin.

The country, however, was still in a state of utter disorder, and Mr. Irwin represented the case plainly to the Madras Government. Finally, Colonel Fullarton, who in 1783 had succeeded to the command of the southern army, marched southwards by way of Sivaganga, which he reached on August 8th; on the 12th he was before Panjalamkurichi, 100 miles distant. Capitulation was refused, and it was decided to storm the fort.

55 Press list of ancient Dutch records from 1657-1825. Serial No. 813

56 Kanyakumari District gazetteer, op.cit., p.77
A battery was hastily constructed, and fire was opened on the north-east bastion. This proving ineffectual, it was decided to breach the adjoining curtain. The enemy, who manned the defences in thousands, kept up a constant fire, and it was dark before a practicable breach was effected. The defenders replied with pikes and musketry and obliged the storming party to retire to their battery after considerable slaughter on both sides. The poligars, however, lost heart and abandoned the place, sallying by the eastern gate. An enormous quantity of guns and ammunition was captured. A find of 40,000 star pagodas was distributed among the troops. The original of a treaty between Kattabomman and the Dutch Government of Colombo was discovered in the fort.57

Leaving a garrison in the place, Colonel Fullarton proceeded by way of Palayamkottai to Sivagiri. The poligar, as usual, took refuge in his kombai, or ravine, and Colonel Fullarton prepared to attack him. After a desperate contest the summit was reached, the Sivagiri troops in the kombai were taken in the flank, and the position was captured. Summoning the leading poligars to his camp, Colonel Fullarton informed them that he was leaving on the 21st September. “But that if they did not return to their allegiance, he would make a vow to Siva, the Gentoo God. Whose attribute is vengeance, to march back and spread destruction through

57 Shungunny Menon P., op.cit., p.146
every possession of the defaulting poligars”. 58 The improvement in the situation promised by the concentration in the hands of the Company of all control, both civil and military, was short-lived; for in 1785 the "Assignment” was surrendered, and Mr. Irwin, under orders, handed over the management of the district to the Nawab's Amildars. Five years later, the Madras Government, finding it impossible to induce the Nawab to pay his share of the Company's expenses, “assumed” by proclamation’ the management of the country and established a Board of Assigned Revenues to administer the revenues. Mr. Benjamin Turin was sent down to Tinnevelly as "Collector of Tinnevelly and the dependent poligars” 59

In July 1792 a definite treaty was effected with the Nawab, by which the Madras Government undertook at their own risk and expense to collect the whole of the peshkash or dues of the poligars and to allow the Nawab credit for this amount in the contribution due by him to the Company. The management of the district was to rest with the Company until an amount equal to the arrears due had been collected. In virtue of this agreement Mr. Turin was in the same year appointed “Collector of the Jamindars and Poligar Peshkash in the Tinnevelly, Madura. Trichinopoly Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga districts” 60

58 Shungunny Menon P., op.cit., p.78

59 Aitchison Treaties, VIII, p. 35

Colonel Maxwell was also deputed to Tinnevelly, and with Mr. Torin proceeded to make a settlement with the poligars. The Sivagiri poligar had just put the Settur chief to death; Sivagiri was again attacked, but the poligar seems to have escaped punishment. The Settur palayam was seized by a usurper, but Major Stevenson, who had gone to attack the place, was told by Government to confine himself to giving warnings. Kattabomma Nayakkan was plundering Alvarthirunagari and Srivaikundam.\textsuperscript{61}

The records of the time are little more than a catalogue of acts of freebooting and violence. In 1797 the poligar of Singampatti shot his colleague of Urkad; the Sivagiri estate had been wrested from the poligar by his own son. In fact the anomalies of the situation created by the treaty of 1792 were becoming daily more apparent though the Company was responsible for the collection of the peshkash. The Nawab’s ultimate sovereignty was recognized even over the poligars; the administration of the “Circar territory” and its inhabitants was actually in the hands of the Nawab’s officers.\textsuperscript{62} By means of their \textit{kaval} system the poligars exercised as much control over the Circar villages as any Government officer, and in these villages the Company had by the terms of the treaty no

\textsuperscript{61} Sreedhara menon. A., op.cit., p. 289

\textsuperscript{62} Press list of ancient Dutch records from 1657-1825, serial No: 1131, 1781 6\textsuperscript{th} January, Cochin.
concern. The system was clearly unworkable, and none recognized more clearly than the poligars the opportunities which such divided control offered.\textsuperscript{63}

The centre of disaffection was the poligar of Panjalamkurichi. Almost the whole of the eastern country lay at his mercy, and, as soon as the great rebellion broke out, in 1797, in the Ramnad district, he was the first of the Tinnevelly poligars to join the insurgents. His powerful leadership had secured a strong following, chief amongst whom were the poligars of Nagalapuram, Kadalgudi, Melmandai, Kulattur, and Elayarampannai.\textsuperscript{64}

\textbf{Treaty of 1795}

To crown the difficulties, the Raja of Travancore was now directed to meet part of the expenses of the 3rd Mysore war. Charles Oakley, the Governor of Madras, demanded from the Raja four fifth of the revenues of his country or half the net revenues, provided the Raja met the expenses of his troops now serving with the English army.\textsuperscript{65} In another communication he observed that the war was undertaken upon the Raja's account. It had been carried on with all the forces of the Company and at an enormous expense. The resources of Madras and Bengal Presidencies and the greatest part of the resources of the Carnatic and Tanjore had

\textsuperscript{63} Caldwell. R., op.cit., p.119

\textsuperscript{64} Kanyakumari District gazetteer, op.cit., p.79

\textsuperscript{65} Mil. Count. Corr. Vol. XXXXI, p.28
been appropriated for this undertaking. Their success guaranteed to his territory honour and security.\textsuperscript{66} The additional contribution from the Raja was fixed at ten lakhs of rupees per annum from the period of commencement of the war. It was an additional subsidy independent of the charges of his troops. George Powney, the Resident at his Durbar was instructed to receive the amount.\textsuperscript{67}

The Maharaja authorised his Dewan with full powers to settle the accounts with the Company. After consultations with the Resident, the Dewan wrote: “The Honorable Company have thought proper to make a demand upon my Rajah of ten lacs to carry on the execution of the war, from its commencement The Raja has therefore directed me to settle this with you. After many conversations I have proposed the following terms, which you have been pleased to accept, I do engage on the part of the Rajah, to pay annually ten Jaccs of rupees from the commencement of the war, which the Honorable Company has been carrying on against Tippu Sultan”\textsuperscript{68} Forwarding this letter, Powney wrote to the Governor of Madras: "I have used every possible endeavour to persuade the Rajah to discharge the amount immediately in cash, but every argument and indeed such constant excuses of inability of an early liquidation and such procrastination, have attended

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., Vol. XXXXII, pp. 22, 23
\textsuperscript{67} Sobhanan. B., op.cit., p. 51
\textsuperscript{68} Pol. Cons. Proc., 5 October 1791, p. 4009
every payment the Rajah has performed, that I consider myself fortunate in accomplishing it in this manner.”

The demand for an additional subsidy was against all the expectations of the Raja and against the Agreement of 1788 concluded with Sir Archibald Campbell. According to the Agreement, the Company had agreed that if “any further force of Europeans or Sepoys necessary to repel the attacks of an enemy, became necessary, they will be supplied at the Company's expenses, on condition that you (the King) furnish them with grain and such other articles at the usual rates. In consequence of this demand, a heavy financial burden was placed on the Raja, in addition to the heavy expenses, which the state had to bear during the war. The additional demand of the Company further worsened the financial position of the state. The Raja imposed several taxes upon the people against all precedents and raised a large amount.

The Raja imposed Nilavari (tax on wet lands) and Kadamavari (tax on garden-lands). Thirattus of 1792 and 1796 show the levy of a special war-tax. Sir T. Madhava Rao drew a graphic picture of the difficult situation the Raja found himself in to meet the Company’s demands and the Maharaja therefore imposed a heavy tax for a short period in preference to a light one for a long period. It is also

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69 Pol. Cons. Proc., 5 October 1791, pp. 4003 - 4

70 Shungunny menon., op.cit., p.142
to be noted that all description of land, without respect to tenure, came under this extra-ordinary impost, which in the aggregate is said to have yielded about one million and seven hundred thousand rupees. The Raja, who was sorely distressed at the turn of events revealed his utter helplessness in a confidential letter to his minister. Raja Kesava Das: “I have not in any way hound myself to contribute to the expenses of the war: yet the Company presses for payment. I have raised loans and paid 14 lacs, yet they make further demands. My previous debts remain unpaid. I have raised money by doing what I ought not to do. I never was in such anxiety and distress before. The Company care more for money than for their friends’.71

However the Raja's attachment to the Company was never shaken. He appealed to Lord Cornwallis, the Governor-General to persuade the Company’s authorities at Madras to stop further demands for money on the ground of his past meritorious and sincere services. On 21 September 1793 he submitted a memorial tracing his cordial relations with the Company. In the same despatch the Raja expressed his intention to conclude a solemn agreement with the Company, that it may prove 'as a bulwark of friendship for the present and future ages and may tend to the protection of my honor, my respect and my power during my period and for

71 Shungunny menon P., op.cit., p. 143
my family after me." His proposals contained five articles. According to the first article the Company was bound to furnish troops, in addition to the two battalions, to protect the Raja from his enemies. "Whatever may be the expense according from the assistance thus furnished to the Rajah the Company shall at no time demand from the Rajah and shall always furnish him with their aid and assistant it was a guarantee of protection against all enemies.

According to the second article the Company’s officers were authorised to receive from the Raja the fixed annual subsidy for the two battalions of sepoy which shall never suffer any increase or diminution. Friendship with him shall never allow the Company to interfere in the affairs and rights of his country and government. The settlement and arrangement of every transaction in his country whether of sovereignty or revenue and the administration of justice shall remain with the Raja.

The 3rd article requested the Governor-General to withdraw the additional demand upon him in return for the assistance he received. He had already paid ten lakhs of rupees towards the same. The King pointed out that it was as a security against any internal commotion or external aggression that he had agreed to station

72 Sobhanan. B. op.cit., p.53

73 Ibid., p. 54

two battalions of the Company’s troops in his territory and defray the cost of their maintenance. It was agreed that if additional troops would be required to meet any emergency, they would be provided at the cost of the Company. Hence the demand for additional subsidy was not proper.\(^\text{75}\)

On 20th September, 1793. William Gamal Farmer, one of the Commissioners deputed, to Malabar, transmitted to the Supreme Government, copy of a letter addressed to Major Alexander Dow, the Commissioner from Bombay to ‘settle the accounts with the Raja.’ He stated that "I see nothing further in his appeal to Marquess Cornwallis than another step in his progress of constant and mean evasion of compliance with every act, which faith, justice and solemn agreements bound him to perform when such act became in the least repugnant to the leading and the only principle of the Dewan. The accumulation of treasure."\(^\text{76}\) He charged the Raja that instead of fulfilling the terms of the pepper contract faithfully with the Company he secretly sold it to other foreigners at a higher rate. It was a gross violation of the great confidence the Company reposed in him. He believed that the Raja possessed immense treasures and the poverty he pleaded was nothing but pretension.\(^\text{77}\)

\(^\text{75}\) Ibid., p.11818-27

\(^\text{76}\) Shungunny Menon., op.cit, p.144

\(^\text{77}\) Press list of ancient Dutch Records from 1657 -1825 Serial No. 657, Cochin.
Marquess Cornwallis had departed for England before the arrival of the above despatch. His appeal was perused by Sir John Shore, the new Governor-General. But before taking any decision on the Raja’s memorial, the Governor-General invited the Raja's immediate attention to rectify "the actual breach of duties of friendship" caused by the deficiency in the pepper delivery."\(^{78}\)

On 21st March 1794 John Hutchinson, the Commercial Resident at Anjengo conveyed to the Raja the new arrangement for pepper delivery, which he hoped would be satisfactory." The Raja's request for a permanent treaty was taken for discussion only in September 1795. On a careful consideration of the Raja's past dealings with the Company, on 24th September 1795, the Governor General recorded in his minute the necessity for "the policy and expediency of gratifying a Prince who had thus demonstrated a long and tried attachment to the Company and who is considered as entitled to the privileges of an ally."\(^{79}\) He stated that the necessity for a fresh treaty with the Raja of Travancore was now 'fully proved and established'.

He found in Travancore a good ally on the Malabar Coast, in case of a French attack upon the British settlements in Malabar. He also hoped to remove by means of the new treaty the French Officers who commanded the Raja's army. He

\(^{78}\) Sobhanan. B., op.cit., p. 54

\(^{79}\) Ibid., p. 55
observed that the Raja of Travancore is known to possess an extensive influence over the neighbouring Rajas, who consider his conduct as an example for their own. "This suggestion places the value of friendship and attachment of the Rajah of Travancore in new light and furnishing security for the interests of the Company on the Malabar Coast." Moreover, he did not find any possibility for a dispute on the part of the Raja with any of the powers like the Marathas and the Nizam. Hence he recommended certain proposals for a treaty of perpetual friendship, alliance and Subsidy.

Art I. The treaty guaranteed the dominions of the Raja of Travancore to his heirs and successors, including the three districts of Paravur, Alangad and Kunnattunad against the unprovoked invasion or attack of any enemy.

Art. 2. In consideration of such a guarantee, the Raja agreed to pay by fixed instalments to the Company a sum equivalent to the expense for four battalions of sepoys, a Company of European artillery and two companies of lascars. (This provision however was against the expectations of the Raja. His proposals did not envisage any increase in the subsidiary force. The expenses according to the present proposals were, he contended, beyond his capacity to pay.)

\[80\] Caldwell R., op.cit., p.144
Art. 3. The stationing of the subsidiary force either in or outside his dominions, was left to his discretion.

Art. 4. It was made clear that the Company was bound to protect the Raja only in ease of unprovoked aggression and he was bound to submit all the disputes for the arbitration of the Company.

Art. 5. The Raja was prohibited from entertaining the enemies of the Company in his service or entering into any engagements with them.

Art. 6. The Raja was obliged to provide 4,000 infantry and 500 cavalry at the requisition of the British Government in ease they were engaged in war either in the Carnatic or in Malabar.

Art. 7. The pepper contract between the Company and the Raja was to continue in perpetuity liable to further modification us to price, time or quantity after the expiry of the period of the present contract.

Art. 8. The internal administration was left in the exclusive control of the Raja.

Art. 9. All unsettled claims of a pecuniary nature up to the conclusion of the 3rd Mysore war was cancelled and declared as null and void.81

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Jonathan Duncan, the Governor of Bombay, was authorised to discuss and settle the terms of the treaty with the Raja. After a detailed discussion on 3rd February 1796 the Raja accepted the modified draft of the perpetual treaty. On 5th August 1796 the Honorable Court of Directors reviewing and ratifying the terms of the proposed treaty stated that "they highly approve of the treaty, the terms of which have been dictated by the soundest principles".

In conclusion they observed that "the mutual relation between the Company and the Rajah of Travancore being thus clearly defined, we trust that the Rajah will be punctual in the regular discharge of the subsidy for protection afforded him as well as in the performance of every other engagements and that the treaty will operate to the mutual benefit of both parties.” The Governor of Bombay wrote to Kesava Pillai: “Having signed and sealed the treaty of perpetual friendship and subsidy, I trust it would be your constant aim to attend to the fulfilment of the requisites thereof, without admitting of the smallest neglect or deviation, by which you will evince your regard for your master, and your desire that the long formed, and happy connection between him and the English may daily continue to increase.”

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83 Ibid., 10 February, 1797, p. 6255
84 Pol. Cons. Proc., 9 October 1791, p.13342
Through the treaty the Raja acknowledged the *do facto* sovereignty of the Company. The vexing financial problems still remained unsettled. At the climax of the financial crisis the Raja was forced to seek a loan from the Bombay Government. On August 1795 the Bombay Government agreed to give 6 lakhs of rupees on condition that it would be discharged in three annual payments of 1,000 candies of pepper and to bear an interest for 10 per cent per annum.\(^{85}\) He borrowed huge amounts from bankers and merchants of other countries at a high rate of interest. The debts with accumulated interest remained unpaid for a long time.

For instance the Raja had borrowed Rs. 2, 20,001/-from two merchants of Jannapattanim - Murali Das and Balakrishna Das-and Rs. 20,000 -front Mathu Tharakan, a Syrian Christian merchant. The interest on the above amounts was fixed as Rs. 30,000/- per annum.\(^{86}\) There were several other debts which gave constant headache to the Government. Some of the debts remained unsettled even after the death of his successor. For example on 15th August 1814 Genarta Poy, a merchant of Purakkad residing at Tellicherry submitted a petition before the Madras Government saying that "in the Malabar year 970 (1795) His Highness the former Rajah of Travancore being in want of money on loan to satisfy the demands of the British Government called on your petitioner to lend the Sircar as

\(^{85}\) Sobhanan. B. op.cit., p.57

\(^{86}\) Velu Pillai T. K., Travancore State Manual, Trivandrum, 1940, Appendix. p.187
much as he could and in compliance with the Highness’s wish your petitioner lent the amount of two lacs of rupees on bonds now in his possession payable with interest at 12 per cent per annum".  

Rama Varma experienced the most acute financial stringency. Without the least regard to his past services for the perpetuation of English interests in Malabar, he was badly treated by the British authorities. During the third session of the 18th Parliament of Great Britain on 22 March 1799, Mr. Dundas, the Secretary of State, submitting the accounts of the English East India Company for 1797, stated that "the only disappointment in regard to the estimate now referred to is the subsidy from Travancore." According to the treaty of 1795 the Raja was bound to pay £42914/- per annum as subsidy. But he failed to make the stipulated payment during the period from 1794-5 to 1796-7.

In 1793-94 he had remitted £1249/- which was his last payment. At the height of the financial crisis Rama Varma expired after a long reign of 40 years. The situation on the eve of his demise was thus summed up by Dewan Sir T. Madhava Rao: “Even extra-ordinary taxation failed to yield adequate means to answer the incessant call for funds. The Maha Rajah felt that he could not, without

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87 Pol. Cons. Proc., 19th October 1816, p. 4

88 Ibid., p. 5

89 Sobhanan B., op.cit., p. 58
exciting dangerous discontent among his subjects, increase their burdens, and saw no alternative but that of raising loans.

Funds were indeed thus obtained to meet the pressing exigencies of the state, but the obligations incurred inevitably led to difficulties of the gravest character, difficulties which embittered the closing years of the Maha Rajah and culminated in a perilous crisis in the reign of his successor. Fra Paolino Da San Bartholomeo, a contemporary writer had neatly described the relations between the English and the Maharaja: “As long as he enjoys the friendship of these allies, from whom he purchases freedom and security at a sufficiently dear rate and as long as he pays regularly what is due on that account his dominions will be protected and defended but if ever a quarrel should arise between him and the Governor of Madras, he is one of the first Indian princes that will fall a sacrifice.

The period of Dharma Raja was highly advanced on administrative and cultural progress. The Raja was helped by the Chief Minister Kesava Pillai. Kesava Pillai was familiarly known as Raja Kesava Dhas. Raja Kesava Dhas was the first chief minister of Travancore. He assumed the title Dewan. In 1795 an agreement was signed between Raja Kesava dhas and English. In this agreement the Nawab of Arcot, Um-Dath-ul-Umara was given the right to have tax collection

90 Ibid., p. 59

91 Sobhanan B., p.83
throughout southern areas. Dharma Raja was also directed by this agreement to pay tribute to the British. So from 1795 onwards Travancore had to pay tribute to the British. A British resident was appointed to collect the tribute from Dharma Raja. Thus the long drawn struggle between Travancore and Tirunelveli ended in the payment of tribute (6 lakhs) to the British. In 1800 col. Maccalay came to Trivandrum as British resident with the intension of collection of tributes.